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February 12, 2021

Dear Friends,

It is Black History Month.

All this month, I am lifting the voices of Black women writers, as they should be lifted every day of every month of every year. Here are two more writers whose work should be known, bought, supported, shared, read aloud, and raised up.

Poet and vocalist **Jamila Woods** was raised in Chicago and graduated from Brown University, where she earned a BA in Africana Studies and Theatre & Performance Studies. Influenced by Lucille Clifton and Gwendolyn Brooks, much of her writing explores Blackness, womanhood, and the city of Chicago.

“Blk Girl Art”  
 by Jamila Woods  
 after Amiri Baraka

Poems are bullshit unless they are eyeglasses, honey tea with lemon, hot water bottles on tummies. I want poems my grandma wants to tell the ladies at church about. I want orange potato words soaking in the pot til their skins fall off, words you burn your tongue on, words on sale two for one, words that keep my feet dry. I want to hold a poem in my fist in the alley just in case. I want a poem for dude at the bus stop. Oh you can't talk ma? Words to make the body inside my body less invisible. Words to teach my sister how to brew remedies in her mouth. Words that grow mama's hair back. Words to detangle the kitchen. I won't write poems unless they are an instruction manual, a bus card, warm shea butter on elbows, water, a finger massage to the scalp, a broomstick sometimes used for cleaning and sometimes to soar.

**Aja Monet** is a Caribbean-American poet, performer, and educator from Brooklyn. She has been awarded the Andrea Klein Wullison Prize for Poetry and the Nuyorican Poets Café Grand Slam title, as well as the New York City YWCA's "One to Watch Award."

"564 park avenue"

by Aja Monet

abuelita's hands were a time card she clocked  
in and out, morning and night. they were  
a pile of dirty sheets at the foot of a bed,  
gnarled broomsticks, dustpans, and sooty vacuums,  
her hands were soiled rags in yellow gloves,  
they were two pillows beaten of mites  
and dead skin, her hands were paper towels  
and windex on greasy mirrors.  
they were many rooms each day.  
her hands were a slice of wonder bread  
dipped in dark coffee with sugar,  
they were cinnamon sticks oozing in farina,  
they were ketchup squeezed over a plate  
of scrambled eggs and white rice  
they were what fed and cleansed  
her hands were my hands  
rushing to school before work.

Seek out Black women writers. This month and every month. Your life will be so much richer for it. Tell me who some of your favorite Black writers are so I can learn and grow.

### LINKS YOU MIGHT ENJOY

I do love reading nonfiction. [Here's a list of the best 50 nonfiction books](#) in the past 25 years.

I think the [cat-lawyer](#) was the joy we all didn't know we needed. If you, too, want to be a cat on your next Zoom call, [you certainly can](#).

Santa brought Feliks a subscription to Universal Yums, so every month he receives a box of snacks from around the world. It might be his favorite gift that keeps on giving. It's a hard world. [Snacks might help.](#)

There are a few writers (Jesmyn Ward, Richard Powers, Marilynne Robinson, and Claudia Rankine among them) whose every work I will buy sight unseen. [George Saunders is one of those writers.](#)

## UPCOMING CLASSES - STARTING SOON!

### FIRST 37 - starts Feb 15

Over 280 people have just participated in "First 37" to start 2021 with intention. I'm going to offer it again, starting on February 15th, and invite you to join us! This is an experience that provides 3 thought-provoking "prompts" a day in an online classroom to help you be more intention-driven and less circumstance-driven in 2021. An amazing community of folks always forms in the process as we learn together for 37 days. The cost is a pandemic-friendly \$37 to make it more accessible. [Go here for more information!](#)

### NEXT 37 - starts Feb 15

If you just participated in "First 37" beginning on January 1, you are welcome to continue with an all-new "Next 37," starting on February 15. Let the learning and community continue! [Go here for information!](#)

### WRITERS IN THE PANDEMIC - starts Feb 15

This two-week online course is intended to help you write consistently every day. [Go here for information.](#)

For just \$37, you will get:

- Three thought-provoking prompts to respond to each day in our online classroom
- Two one-hour Zoom calls with Patti Digh and the community of writers in the course
- Ongoing access to a private Facebook group for Writers in the Pandemic

**WRITERS IN THE PANDEMIC - TWO - starts Feb 15:** This 2-week online course is for those who have just finished the first Writers in the Pandemic course and hope to continue their writing. [Go here](#) for more information.

## FREE THINGS!

### FREE WRITING PROMPTS FOR 2021

Do you want to get back to a consistent writing routine in the New Year? I am offering free writing prompts **every Monday-Friday** in 2021. If you'd like to receive them, you can do so in either of the following ways:

**By text:** Text "writing prompts" to me at 828-248-7513 to sign up for free. Your first prompt will arrive via text the day after you sign up (Monday - Friday).

**By email:** [Go here](#) to sign up for free. Your first prompt will arrive the day after you sign up (Monday - Friday). We added this method because some of you couldn't participate by text. I hope it is helpful!

I'll see you next Friday from my Orange Desk!

4/28/2021

Double Mask! It's All The Rage!

Double mask! Cute mask over N95 mask! It's all the rage!

Patti

Sent to: [\\_t.e.s.t\\_@example.com](mailto:_t.e.s.t_@example.com)

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